

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GS

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SUBJECT: VISITS BY GREEK OFFICIALS TO US INSTALLATIONS
ON MARCH 19-21

REFS: (A) JCS 050034Z MAR 75; (B) USCINCEUR 111725Z MAR 75

SUMMARY. AS PREVIOUSLY ARRANGED, A GROUP OF GREEK OFFICIALS VISITED SOUDHA AB AND NEARBY INSTALLATIONS MARCH 19 AND IRAKLION AS MARCH 20. ON MARCH 21, THEY VISITED ELEFSIS HOMEPORTING SITE, INCLUDING DESRON 12, AND ATHENAI AB. DURING EVERY VISIT THEY WERE MET WITH OPENNESS, CORDIALITY, AND CANDOR AND LEFT EACH TIME FEELING THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED ALL ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT THE US PRESENCE AND THE ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT AT AND FROM THE INSTALLATION IN QUESTION. WE BELIEVE VISITS DISPELLED MUCH OF THE SUSPICION REGARDING US ACTIVITIES IN GREECE AND WILL RESULT IN BETTER-INFORMED DIALOGUE IN FURTHER ROUNDS OF BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. ON MARCH 19 AMBASSADOR CALOGERAS, ACCOMPANIED BY HAF OFFICERS COL. SPYRON, COL. TRIANTAFYLLOS, AND CAPT
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LAKATHOSIS AND ESCORTED BY POL/MIL OFFICER PUGH, VISITED

US NAVY DETACHMENT SOUDHA AB AS WELL AS MOMAG AND NIWTU. THE VISITORS DECLINED OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT NATO FUEL AND AMMO STORAGE AREAS OR NAMFI (ALTHOUGH THEY HEARD A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE US ELEMENT FROM SENIOR US OFFICER STATIONED AT LATTER INSTALLATION) ON GROUNDS THAT THEIR MANDATE FOR INSPECTION DID NOT INCLUDE THESE ACTIVITIES. AFTER A BRIEFING BY CAPT. BLACKWELDER AND OTHER US OFFICERS, ALSO ATTENDED BY HAF BASE COMMANDER AND TWO OF HIS STAFF OFFICERS, VISITORS SPENT ABOUT 2 1/2 HOURS TOURING FACILITIES AT NAVDET SOUDHA AB FOLLOWED BY SHORT VISITS TO MOMAG AND NIWTU. HIGHLIGHT OF LATTER EVENT WAS PRESENCE OF CLASS OF HELLENIC NAVY UDT TRAINEES RECEIVING INSTRUCTION FROM NIWTU PERSONNEL. CALOGERAS COMMENTED TOWARD END OF VISIT THAT SITUATION AND RELATIONSHIPS AT SOUDHA AB WAS ONE THAT OUGHT TO SERVE AS A MODEL FOR OTHER US FACILITIES.

2. TOUR OF IRAKLION AS ON MARCH 20 BY SAME GROUP BEGAN WITH BASE BRIEFING BY LT. COL. EMBRY AND PRIMARY MISSION BRIEFING BY CAPT. HEARRON, FOLLOWED BY TOUR OF INSTALLATION, INCLUDING OPERATIONS BUILDING AND NEARBY HILLTOP COMMUNICATIONS SITE. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES AT EVERY POINT WAS DIRECT AND ALL QUESTIONS FROM VISITORS ELICITED PROMPT, REASONABLE ANSWERS, WHICH SEEMED TO SATISFY THE QUESTIONER. ONLY COL. SPYROU HAD A COMMUNICATIONS BACKGROUND, BUT HIS QUESTIONS WERE NEITHER PROFOUND NOR DIFFICULT. THE VISITORS REQUESTED AND WERE PROVIDED COPIES OF NOTES FOR THE UNCLASSIFIED BASE BRIEFING, INCLUDING INFO ON ECONOMIC IMPACT, LOCAL EMPLOYMENT, ETC. THEY HAD SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES TO SPEAK WITH LOCAL EMPLOYEES DURING COURSE OF 4 1/2 HOUR INSPECTION OF AIR STATION. UPON RETURN TO ATHENS, CALOGERAS PROFESSED TO BE COMPLETELY SATISFIED, PARTICULARLY WITH THE PRIMARY MISSION BRIEFING AT IRAKLION AS.

3. DURING AM. OF MARCH 21, CALOGERAS, ACCOMPANIED BY COL. VYNIOS HAF AND CAPT. EFSTATHIOU HN, AND ESCORTED BY MINISTER STEARNS AND POL/MIL OFFICER PUGH, RECEIVED BRIEFING ON HOMEPORTING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES

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BY CAPTS. O'BRIEN AND SYLVA FOLLOWED BY DETAILED TOUR OF ELEFSIS PIER. CAPT. MUSTIN, COMDESRON 12, THEN RECEIVED GROUP ON USS VREELAND FOR DISCUSSION OF HOMEPORTING CONCEPT AND EXPERIENCE TO DATE. ALTHOUGH PIER TOUR AND FOLLOWING DISCUSSION WERE WELL-DONE, AND CALOGERAS SEEMED TO APPRECIATE FACTORS WHICH UNDERLAY ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM IN ATHENS, HIS COMMENTS SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT GOG, AND HE PERSONALLY, WERE NOT

SWAYED FROM THEIR EARLIER, UNSYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TOWARD
HOMEPORING.

4. DURING PM OF MARCH 21, CALOGERAS, VYNIOS, TRIANTAFYLLOU,
SPYROU AND LT. COL. ANDRIKOS HAF, ESCORTED BY STEARNS
AND PUGH, RECEIVED BRIEFING BY COL. CARUS, CO 7206 ABGRP,
AND PRINCIPAL TENANT ELEMENT COMMANDERS, FOLLOWED BY
EXTENSIVE TOUR OF ATHENAI AB FACILITIES. HIGHLIGHTS OF
TOUR WERE INSPECTIONS OF RC-135 AND EP-3 ACFT AND
BRIEF VISIT TO SCTY SQD COMPOUND. FOLLOWING RECEIPT
OF BRIEFING MATERIAL AT IRAKLION AS, VISITORS REQUESTED
COPIES OF SIMILAR BRIEFINGS PRESENTED TO THEM BY
USNFSO AND 7206 ABGRP. MATERIAL WILL BE PROVIDED
MARCH 26.

5. THE IMPRESSION CREATED BY THESE VISITS WAS QUITE
POSITIVE, PARTICULARLY THE APPRECIATION THE VISITORS
GAINED OF THE BREADTH AND SCOPE OF THE ACTIVITIES ON
ATHENAI AB. CALOGERAS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS COMMENTED
ON THE FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE OF ALL THE US COMMANDERS.
WHEN ASKED IF IN ADDITION TO MARCH 28 VISITS TO ATO
SITES AND NAVCOMSTA NEA MAKRI HE WISHED TO VISIT OTHER
SMALLER US ELEMENTS WITHIN GREECE, CALOGERAS EXPRESSED
SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRAM AS CURRENTLY LAID OUT.

6. COMMENT: WE DOUBT THAT ANY PROFOUND CHANGE WILL BE
PRODUCED IN GOG APPROACH TO US-GREEK SECURITY
RELATIONSHIP BY THESE VISITS, BUT THEY COULD WELL HAVE
AN IMPACT WHERE EARLIER IGNORANCE AND SUSPICION MAY HAVE
RESULTED IN A NEGATIVE APPROACH. WE HOPE THIS WILL BE
THE CASE FOR ATHENAI AB. WE BELIEVE THAT THE APPROACH
TAKEN BY THE VARIOUS US COMMANDERS STRUCK THE PROPER
NOTE OF PRIDE IN THEIR UNITS' PERFORMANCES, CONCERN TO
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ACHIEVE THE BEST POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP WITH ADJACENT
GREEK COMMUNITIES, AND EAGERREADINESS TO COOPERATE WITH
HELLENIC FORCES IN ALL POSSIBLE WAYS.
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